

Crusading Spirit of Calvinism.

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to whom it is given, for good or for evil, to form history in the mould of an inflexible will. He may rank as the equal of Hildebrand and Luther in this respect. Nay, in regard to his far-reaching influence, he is more like Hildebrand than Luther. Unlike Hildebrand and Luther, he had no vast empire as his field of action; he toiled in a small city of less than twenty thousand inhabitants, and yet he made Geneva the capital of a vast spiritual dominion, which embraced France, part of Germany, Holland, England to some extent, Scotland, and, through England, the northern half of the New World. Luther's influence was ultimately little felt beyond the bounds of the empire and the neighbouring Scandinavian lands, and only a part of even Germany bowed to his ecclesiastical sceptre. After the first few years of propagandism, Luther-anism became stagnant, impotent for expansion. Calvinism, on the other hand, became the crusading force of the Reformation. It gathered its strength for invasion, battle, conquest, and it won kingdoms, states, far beyond the little city on the shores of Lake Lemman. Its missionary, aggressive spirit did not spend itself in a brief spurt of proselytism. It lived as a religious and political force, through defeat and triumph alike, to mould the destiny of kingdoms as old as Scotland and England, States yet unborn, like Holland and the United States. To trace the course of liberty among the modern nations (of despotism, too, alas !) is partly at least to write the history of Calvinism. To attribute the destiny of Calvinism to Calvin himself would be to overrate the man and his influence. Many men, many influences, contributed to the shaping of that destiny, and these men went, happily, beyond Calvin in their inflexible resistance to oppression, if unhappily many of them only too closely imitated him in his intolerant and harsh dogmatism. Nevertheless, the man that gave the impulse to the movement, inspired it with a living power of conviction, endurance, self-assertion, deserves generous recognition for the qualities that made him a great leader of men as well as a great dogmatist. He had a rare faculty for convincing himself that he was right, and to this faculty is due the inspiration that made his followers in many lands heroes and martyrs. That terrible dogma of predestination, to which Burns has given such crass expression, was

a dogma for